

Message Text

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ACTION AID-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 IGA-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02

CU-02 /051 W

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R 191411Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4511

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 5894

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS ET

SUBJECT: ZEMETCHA UPDATE

REF: (A) TOAID A-82; (B) TOAID A-40

1. THE REFERENCED AIRGRAMS DISCUSS THE RURAL WORK CAMPAIGN (ZEMETCHA), ITS ORGANIZATION AND ITS POSITION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT. THE FOLLOWING FACTS AND FIGURES ON THE ZEMETCHA WERE GIVEN TO FSL POL EMPLOYEE BY THE HEAD OF THE ZEMETCHA, MAJOR KIROS ALEMAYEHU, ON MAY 16:

A. FIVE MONTHS INTO THE ZEMETCHA, SOME 59 "BATCHES" TOTALING 49,000 STUDENTS HAVE BEEN DISPATCHED INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE.

B. A TOTAL OF 850 ZEMATCHOCH HAVE RETURNED TO ADDIS. THIS ALLEGEDLY INCLUDES ALL RETURNEES, FOR WHATEVER REASONS.

C. A TOTAL OF 60 ZEMATCHOCH HAVE DIED OR BEEN KILLED WITH 20 OF THOSE 60 DEAD IN GOJJAM PROVINCE.

D. FORTY ZEMATCHOCH ARE CURRENTLY UNDER MEDICAL TREATMENT.

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2. ACCORDING TO MAJOR KIROS, THE CAMPAIGN IS GENERALLY GOING WELL

IN SIDAMO, ARUSSI, BALE AND GEMU GOFA PROVINCES AND NOT AS WELL IN THE REMAINING PROVINCES, PARTICULARLY IN THE NORTH.

3. ACCORDING TO THE SAME SOURCE, THE "DIRG" INTENDS TO EXTEND STUDENTS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE FOR ONE MORE YEAR IF SUFFICIENT FUNDS CAN BE FOUND. KIROS WAS REPORTEDLY SKEPTICAL THAT SUFFICIENT ADDITIONAL MONEY COULD BE OBTAINED FROM FOREIGN DONORS BUT INDICATED THAT THE "DIRG" EXPECTED FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM YUGOSLAVIA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA. KIROS ALSO INDICATED THAT SOME ZEMETCHA STATIONS HAVE SEVERE FOOD SHORTAGES AND THAT FOUR TRUCK LOADS OF FOOD WERE RECENTLY DISPATCHED TO BALE AND SIDAMO PROVINCES TO ATTEMPT TO ALLEVIATE SHORTAGES THERE.

4. EMBASSY CONTINUES TO RECEIVE PLETHORA OF REPORTS FROM VARIOUS PROVINCES, PARTICULARLY FROM GOJJAM AND THE JIMMA AREA IN KIFFA PROVINCE THAT ZEMATCHOCH HAVE BEEN CONSIDERABLY HARASSED, OR DONE A LOT OF HARASSING THEMSELVES WITH RESULT THAT IN SOME CASES THEY HAVE BEEN FORCED TO LEAVE. SOME HAVE BEEN KILLED AS RESULT OF OPPOSITION BY PEASANTS OR DISSIDENT GROUPS.

COMMENT: REPORTS OF ZEMETCHA SUCCESSES DO NOT MAKE "HEADLINES," SO WE DO NOT HEAR MANY OF THESE. HOWEVER, THERE CLEARLY ARE MANY AREAS IN WHICH ZEMETCHA GOING INCREASINGLY WELL. ALONG WITH LAND REFORM THE ZEMETCHA IS "DIRG'S" MAJOR EFFORT TO EXTEND THE REVOLUTION INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE AND "DIRG" HAS CONSIDERABLE STAKE, BOTH FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL, IN ITS SUCCESS. WE HAVE HEARD FROM MANY SOURCES THAT PURPOSE OF ZEMETCHA IS PARTIALY DIRECTED TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT AND PARTIALLY DESIGNED TO KEEP POLITICALLY ACTIVE STUDENTS OUT OF CAPITAL TO GIVE "DIRG" A GRACE PERIOD IN WHICH TO REORGANIZE THE GOVERNMENT. THE ZEMETCHA ITSELF HAS BECOME AN ISSUE FOR STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, HOWEVER, AND IF ZEMATCHOCH ARE EXTENDED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, STUDENT PROTESTS SEEM LIKELY TO INCREASE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROVINCE, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ADDIS05894
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750175-0943
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750537/aaaabhfk.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AID
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 TOAID A-82, 75 TOAID A-40
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <03 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ZEMETCHA UPDATE
TAGS: PINT, PINS, ET
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006